DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 037 133 FL 001 629

AUTHOR Kone, Elliott H.
TITLE Why Have a Language Laboratory?
PUB DATE 60
NOTE 11p.; Appeared in Annual Bulletin 19 of the Connecticut Audio-Visual Education Association, "Modern Techniques in Teaching Foreign Languages: Language Laboratories", p 3-13, 1960

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.65
DESCRIPTORS Audiolingual Methods, Audiovisual Aids, *Cartoons, *Educational History, Educational Planning, *Instructional Program Divisions, *Language Instruction, Language Laboratories, Language Laboratory Equipment, *Language Laboratory Use, Second Language Learning, Tape Recordings

ABSTRACT

Seven principal reasons for having a language laboratory are illustrated with cartoon figures in this article. This simplified discussion comments on pertinent historical developments in language instruction, optimal teaching and learning techniques, and the nature of language. (RL)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

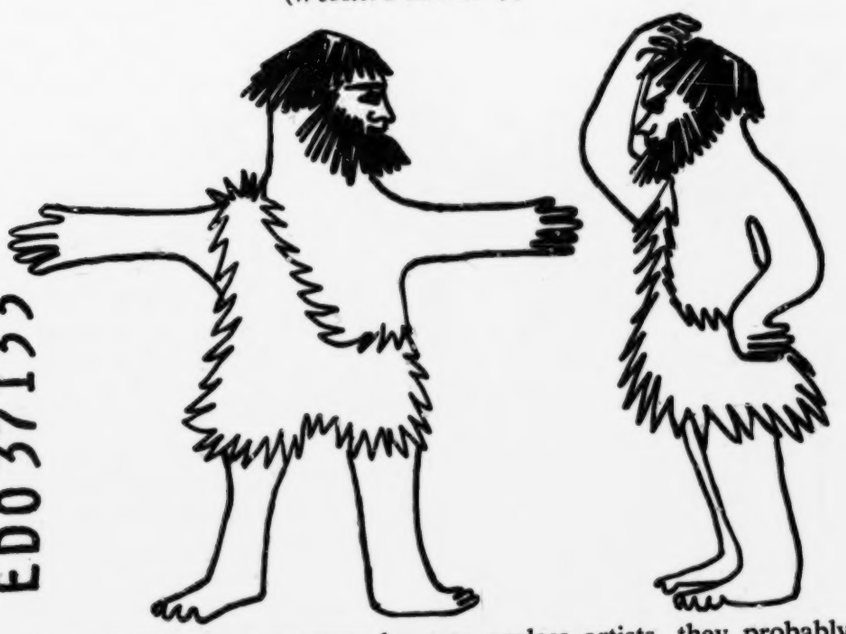
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

WHY HAVE A LANGUAGE LABORATORY?

By ELLIOTT H. KONE
Director, Yale University Audio Visual Center

To communicate—"To give to another as a partaker, to transmit or inform."
(*Webster's dictionary*)

ED037133

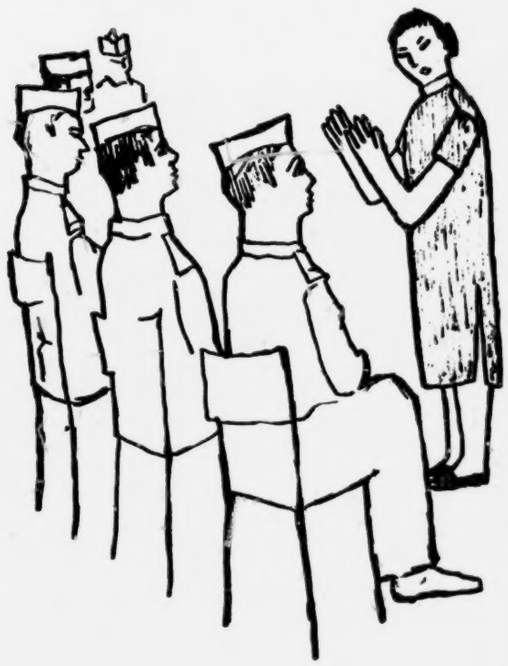


Long before our ancestors became ageless artists, they probably attempted to communicate—perhaps to describe the 'big one' that got away. This was audio-visual communication—audio and visual —at least it was full of grunts and arm-waving. From these harsh, early years of mankind, we have needed to communicate to live.

FL001629

Even more recent ancestors have struggled, some successfully, to exchange thoughts and information and advice. In a world of tension, one of the most effective softeners is understanding, and one can be understood when one's ideas can be communicated and exchanged.

Early in World War II, the Armed Forces used native linguists to instruct its personnel. They taught in such programs as the:



Army Specialized Training Program
Civil Affairs Training School
Navy School of Administration and Government
Air Force Language School

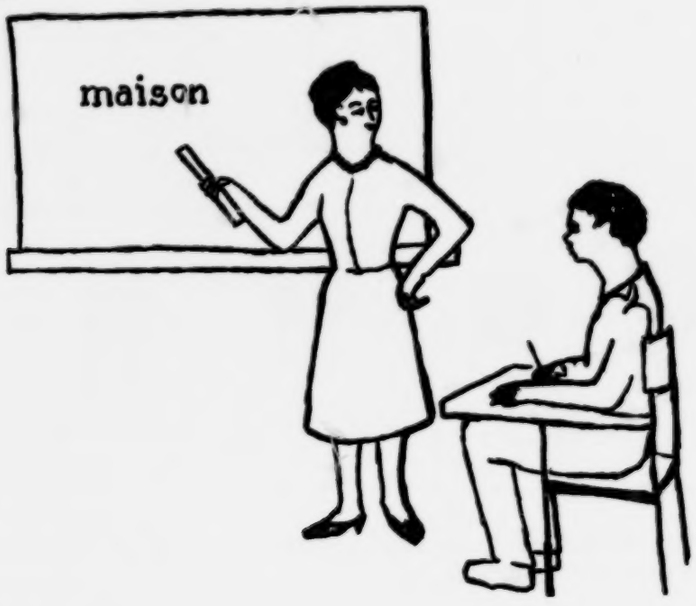
At Yale, the Far Eastern Language Department developed a method of teaching sufficient Japanese, a language which normally required four years to master and at least two years to reach any useful level of proficiency, in only nine months.

Part of the program required that students listening be isolated to the voice of the instructor alone, often by covering all of their ears

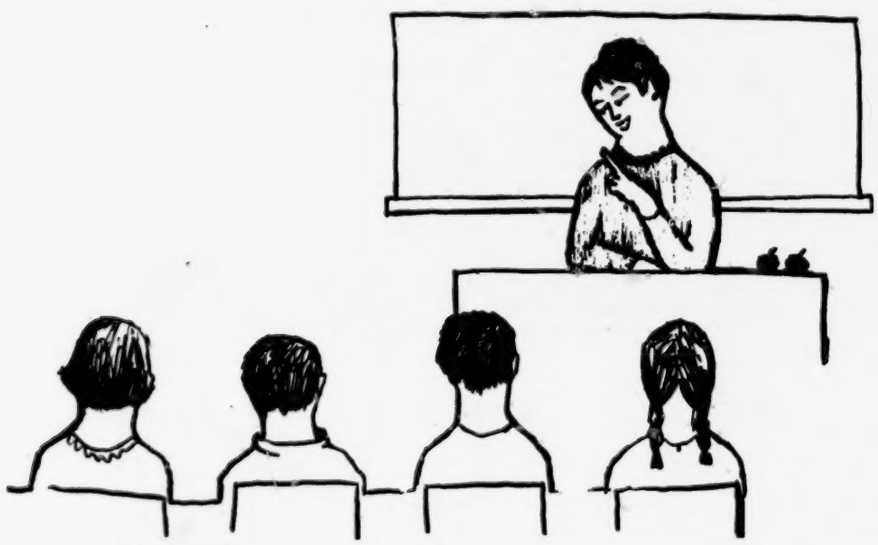
with headphones. This effectively increased the students' concentration and also improved the clarity of the instructor's voice.

Additional work was done by students who, listening to wax discs to review the day's lessons, were thus permitted to have unrestricted repetition of the native tongue until the subject matter was mastered.

Educators have long felt that an ideal teaching situation is achieved when an individual student is taught by a teacher. One student, one teacher.



In today's classes, as one student recites or responds to a teacher's question, the remainder of the class is usually half-interested or bored. A student is able to recite individually only once or twice in a class period.



Often a teacher asks a class to respond to a question *en masse* or repeat a pronounced phrase.

The slow learner pauses and listens for a cue, or hint of the answer, without exercising much thought—just listening ability.

Then he blithely responds with the final part of the answer, satisfied with his accomplishment.

Here is the challenge—a pupil, eager to learn, waiting for us to give him the best teaching that we can muster. In learning a first-year language, authorities of the Modern Language Association of America and others have suggested the following types of activity:

Hearing — 40%

Speaking — 30%

Reading — 20%

Writing — 10%

They go on to say that:

"Language is, first of all, something you say."

"All languages were spoken long before they were written."[1]

To give our student the best experience in hearing, we must

1) remove him from the disturbing influence of his classroom neighbors,

2) bring him as close as possible to the voice of his teacher.

[1] Conn. State Board of Education, *Foreign Languages, Grades 7-12.* State Dept. of Education, Hartford, 1958, (Curriculum Bulletin Series, No. V).

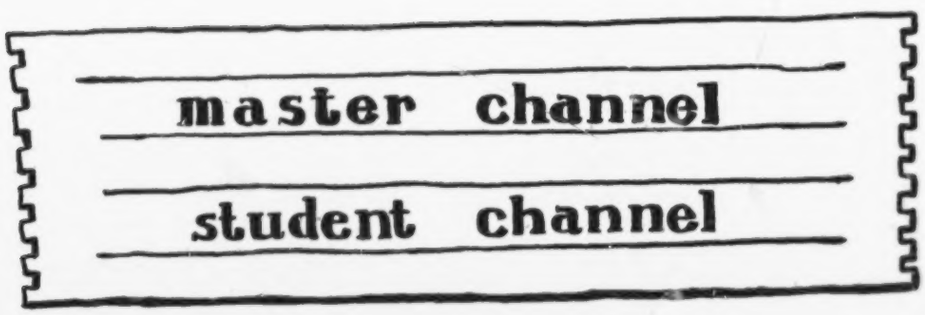
By covering his ears with headphones he is now undistracted and alone with his thoughts and his teacher's voice.

However, when he desires to respond, or imitate the teacher's voice, he cannot hear his own voice well through the bone structure.

The addition of a microphone which reproduces the student's voice, simultaneously as he speaks it, now allows the student to try to imitate the teacher more satisfactorily. The student's voice and the teacher's voice are both heard in the headphones in parallel. Thus, better audio response is achieved.

So the teacher and student are, in effect, alone, since the student has only his teacher's voice and his own response to cope with.

A class of any size is, in reality, a group of individuals studying a lesson with the teacher. If the teacher desires, she can put a prepared tape-recording to play for the students and is free to listen to the on-going work of each pupil; being able to offer advice and encouragement as the lesson proceeds.



Hypothetical section of the student's recording tape

With some systems, the teacher's lesson can be *recorded* on the master channel and the student's voice *recorded* on the lower student channel.

After a lesson has been completed, the tape may be rewound and the student can *hear both channels.*

Then, if the student feels he could do better, he can start again, *listening* to the *upper* channel and *re-recording* on his *own* channel.

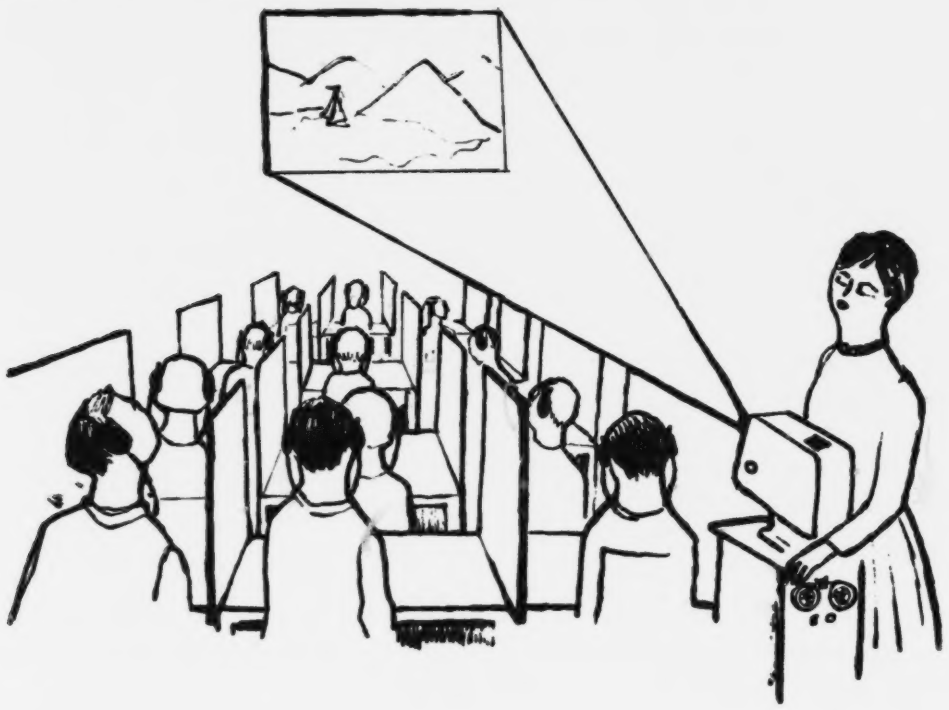
Again, he can *listen to both,* and then repeat the re-recording and listening process over and over.

The master channel will be available as long as it is wanted, and the student channel can be both recorded onto and listened to, at will.

A safety device under the control of the teacher protects the master channel until the teacher desires to allow it to be re-recorded with a new lesson.

Under the individual or library study plan, a student can work with a pre-recorded tape at any time. The teacher's safety control prevents the master channel on such a tape from being erased. The student can mimic, record and hear the lesson until it is mastered.

Visual materials are starting to become more practical and available to accompany recorded lessons. A language laboratory should be equipped to make use of these.



Seven principal reasons for having a language laboratory are:

1. The sound of the teacher's voice reaches each student more clearly and without interference. If a teacher desires, recorded sounds of skilled native speakers may be added. As a student responds to a lesson, his voice is fed to his own ears electronically. Thus he comes closer to the quality of pronunciation that he should use.

2. In isolating a pupil's ears and presence from his class neighbors he again becomes an individual working with the teacher, now depending on his own wits and resources and his ability to respond alone.

3. It is often true that only when a student hears his own recorded voice alternately with that of the teacher that he first learns about the difference of his response from the correct pronunciation.

4. A teacher can now have the equivalent assistance of personal tutors for every student, a "library study" plan whereby each student can work with his own master tape.

5. Audio visual materials can be used easily. The sound can be fed directly to the students' ears from a film track or any type of prerecorded material accompanying filmstrips, etc.

6. The time necessary to master a language is relatively shortened. Many dependable observations in universities indicate that there is a 30%-80% increase in the speed of mastering a language when the laboratory method is used.

7. The language lab democratically permits pupils to advance in their studies at their own pace according to their varied talents—but all are given an equal opportunity to master the subject well.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS [redacted] MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Elliott H. Kone

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."